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1. On the study of contemporary conservatism in Southern Europe: Preliminary remarks and some definitional ambiguities

With the exception of Portugal, a paradox of the Southern European democracies is that they were founded and made workable by ambiguous democrats. In Italy and Greece, it was the lineal descendants of pre-fascist conservatism who came back to power, while, in Spain, former francoist functionaries simply retained theirs. Everywhere, those "new" conservatives found themselves burdened with spoiled political legacies and tainted images. Nonetheless, they all tried to recast their old beliefs in democratic molds and finally succeeded in consolidating the nascent democratic regimes in their respective country by following remarkably similar tactics. So obvious that is often overlooked, the fact is that democratic consolidation in Italy, Greece and Spain occurred under conservative rule and, to a large extent, *is* the outcome of specific conservative-government tactics. I shall, then, take Morlino's advise quite literally: "If consolidation is conceived as a process [...], not merely as the result of a process, the main protagonists of that process [...] must be placed at the center of our analysis."[1] The main aim of this study is to explore the strategies pursued and the political programs applied by those conservatives in Southern Europe who, taking power, aimed to solidify recently established democracies.

Rossiter has put it splendidly: "'Conservatism' is a word whose usefulness is matched only by its capacity to confuse, distort, and irritate."[2] The first task then involves the definition of our referents of the concept "conservative". Whom should we include and whom to leave out? My intention is to consider those conservative parties that meet the following criteria. First, *the*

1 Leonardo Morlino, "Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe", in Richard Gunther, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, and Jans-Jürgen Puhle (eds.), *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 315.

2 Clinton Rossiter, "Conservatism", in David L. Shills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 290.

anti-Left criterion, which sets the leftward boundary of the genus "conservative". Second, *the pro-democracy criterion*, which discriminates against the far-right extreme, thus delimiting the scope of analysis by moving from the genus to the species level. These two criteria help us define our conservative universe against extreme Right[3] and Left,[4] and adequately answer the question: Conservative politics with respect to what? A third criterion, *the relative political significance criterion*, discriminates against politically feeble, albeit sometimes important, formations—that host of small centrist or center-to-the-right parties[5] that, squeezed as they also were between radical Left and undemocratic Right, remained firmly committed to democratic, yet essentially conservative, politics. Two yardsticks become thus readily available for including certain conservative forces in this analysis while excluding others: incumbency (when they are in office) and/or size (when in opposition).

The main objects of analysis should have become clear by now. In Italy, the dominant expression of democratic conservatism was until recently the Democrazia Cristiana (DC), a party that initially emerged as a denominational, interclass formation. Contrary to widespread arguments about the negative relationship between Catholicism and democracy,[6] the DC was able to apply its democratic program in Italy and remain in office for almost half a century. In Greece, Nea Democratia (ND), a party drawing its political lineage from the

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3 In the extreme Right most prominently belong the neofascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI); in Greece, the pro-juntist Ethniki Parataxis (EP); and, in Spain, the Fuerza Nuova and, at least until 1979, the Alianza Popular (AP).

4 With the partial exception of Italy, the crucial distinction in this respect is not between moderate conservatism and the communist left but between the former and its more immediate socialists, that is, the PASOK in Greece and the PSOE in Spain. In Italy, the socialist PSI coalesced with the Christian Democrats, thus, on the Left, it was the communists that remained the most visible opponents of conservative politics.

5 I am here referring mainly to the once-potent Union of the Democratic Center, EDIK, in Greece; the Centro Democrático Social, CDS, in Spain; or the politically significant Liberals, Republicans, and Social Democrats in Italy.

6 See, for instance, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 79-82.

interwar People's Party and political support from all quarters in society, became the fourth consecutive formation of political conservatism in the country. This party managed the 1974 transition to democracy almost single-handedly and, subsequently, handled the developments that led to democratic consolidation. After electoral defeat in 1981, the ND not only managed to survive, but also remained a strong party fit to govern. In Spain, democratic conservatism was represented by a party with the misleading title Union de Centro Democratico (UCD). In reality, the UCD was an offshot of moderate Francoism, led by former Francoist functionaries, yet able to occupy the center in Spanish politics. Like the ND, it played a crucial role during the long phase of transition to democracy in Spain, and remained the incumbent party until 1982. Unlike the ND, however, it gradually disintegrated and, when it lost office, was eclipsed by another conservative party, Alianza Popular (AP). The latter (to be renamed the Partido Popular, PP, in 1989) moved into the vacuum left by the UCD, and made the necessary ideological adjustments to appeal to the moderate voters. Thus, coming to border the socialist PSOE in terms of political competition, the PP became an important and sizeable party with a valid claim to power. By that time, however, political conservatism had developed a wholly different content from that of the early post-authoritarian period.

2. Political conservatism in the era of limited democracy

The origins of modern conservatism in Southern Europe (Portugal inclusive) lay in the earlier decades of this century and are coincident with the tortuous passage from pre-capitalist to more capitalist economies and from oligarchic politics to more democratic ones.[7] This is less to say, of course, that prior to

7 Edward Malefakis, "The Political and Socioeconomic Contours of Southern European History," in Gunther et al., *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation*, 33-76. For a more extended

that time there was no conservatism, than that there was little else besides it. For many slow decades in the nineteenth century financial and agrarian oligarchs had managed to dominate southern European politics and, by trading favors and the spoils associated with office, regularly alternate in power. The aim was to safeguard the interests of what were vaguely termed the "conservative classes" (that is to say, the property-owning oligarchy) and defend them against the apprehended tide of revolution. Other political forces were kept small, usually by limitations on electoral suffrage, and effectively outside the political system. Yet, those political newcomers won considerable moral credits in society, which they would subsequently turn into their most valuable asset in the forthcoming battles against political conservatism.

This anti-popular and exclusive political arrangement became impossible around the turn of the century, just when the European South was trying to accomplish its passage to capitalism. Growing industrialization and the beginning of a trend to the cities helped the emergence of new social forces and the development of assertive labor movements. Change was everywhere under way. In Italy and Spain, in particular, new urban proletariats and old rural paupers turned radical to the point of threatening the stability of the former political consensus. Greece lagged behind similar developments, this due partly to the country's small size and partly to her late industrialization. In all three countries, as new social groups started making their presence felt and increasingly overloaded the old political system with new pressures and demands, it became evident that the time-honored oligarchic design was no longer viable.

At a time when the name conservatism still did not have the loathsome connotations it would later take on, the hegemonic conservatives in Southern

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version, see Malefakis, *Southern Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries: An Historical Overview*, Madrid: Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones, Working Paper 35, 1992.

Europe found it necessary to propose an alternative political design. Confronted with crisis, their most typical reaction was to advocate "revolutions from above". At its core, this political program involved the strengthening of governments and, at society's level, a necessary alignment of national bourgeoisies with what were vaguely termed the "respectable" middle classes[8] or, with no more conceptual clarity, the "conservative classes".[9]

That political venture turned sour. In Spain, the task of "regenerating" conservatism was undertaken first by Francisco Silvela at the turn of the century, and then, even more decisively, by his successors Antonio Maura and Eduardo Dato.[10] The 1909 rising in Barcelona that led to the *semana trágica* and Dato's assassination in 1921 remain sad testimonies to the failures of Spanish reformist conservatism. In Greece, a deep intra-bourgeois conflict developed between two camps, one associated with the monarchy, the other with republicanism. At the center of this conflict was the struggle of the more traditional elements of society associated with an already obese state and its functions (suitably described as a "[petty] bourgeoisie d' état"[11]) against the emerging commercial and entrepreneurial sectors of the middle class.[12] Gradually, however, and in the face of increased agitation at society's base, the Greek middle classes would unite and also support "a series of repressive measures designed to safeguard what came to be described in Greek legal texts

8 Salvador Giner, "Political Economy, Legitimation, and the State in Southern Europe," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, vol.1 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 13.

9 R. A. H. Robinson, "Political Conservatism: The Spanish Case, 1875-1977", *Journal of Contemporary History* 14:4 (October 1979), 511.

10 Besides Robinson, *ibid.*, see Stanley G. Payne, "Spanish Conservatism, 1834-1923", *Journal of Contemporary History* 13:4 (October 1978), 765-89.

11 P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, "Regime Change and the Prospects of Democracy in Greece: 1974-1983", in O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 140.

12 George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, *Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Postauthoritarian Greece*, Madrid: Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones, Working Paper 50, 1994.

as 'the established social order'".[13] Finally, in Italy, moderate conservatives (both the liberal Giolittians and the Catholic Popolari) were no better disposed to push for reforms. Tightly squeezed between fierce clericalism and nationalism from one side and growing radicalism from the other, they proved equally unable to cope with the new era of mass politics. The introduction of proportional representation and the lowering of voting age caused a huge increase of mass parties in Parliament, and political elites proved unable to respond democratically to the mobilization of society. They chose, instead, "to perform the control function that had been relinquished by the institutional structure".[14]

The common difficulty of the foregoing attempts to reform old conservatism was their inability (and, sometimes, unwillingness) to pacify, let alone incorporate, the emerging masses by means of political initiative, social legislation, or ideological moderation. Instead, established political elites sought to keep societies excluded from active politics by using the state—either positively (e.g., selective distribution of state benefits) or in the negative (e.g., selective repression of particular groups or suppression of particular demands). Everywhere personalities prevailed rather than political institutions, clienteles rather than party organizations, patronage rather than generalized social policies. Intensely traditionalist and politically inflexible, the established order not only opposed claims for open democracy; when necessary it did not hesitate to turn reactionary since its main function was defending the status quo instead of accommodating change. When even those measures seemed to be failing, the conservatives (with the notable exception

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13 P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, "Regime Change and the Prospects of Democracy in Greece: 1974-1983", in O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 142.

14 Paolo Farneti, "Social Conflict, Parliamentary Fragmentation, Institutional Shift, and the Rise of Fascism: Italy", in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (eds.), *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 13.

of Italy) went "knocking at the barracks" for army support.[15] Political parties failed to acquire institutional autonomy when exclusionary and repressive politics depended for legitimacy on the state rather than directly on society. In fact, what resembled political parties were no other than loose coalitions of notables and office-seekers without coherent political programs. Being by and large able to control the *classes dangereuses* through their own hold on the state (or, in emergency cases, by army coups), the conservative forces never thought it necessary to constitute themselves in the form of *organized, stable,* and *legitimized* political parties. In the end, they proved singularly unable to attract in their programs the already vocal and increasingly radicalized masses.

Eventually, classic southern European conservatism met its unglorious end when it was succeeded by fascist or military dictatorships. Italy came first with Mussolini's March on Rome in October 1922. Only a few months later, in Spain, the Canovite political system that had lasted for over forty years would also be dismanled and replaced by the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. Democracy was briefly reinstituted in Spain during the short-lived Second Republic (1931-36), but by that time conservatism was very much on the defensive vis-à-vis the left, and also lacked clear political purpose. Greece had its dictatorial experience in 1936 with the Metaxas regime. Limited democracy enjoyed a new, albeit not ordinary, lease of life in the 1950s and early 1960s. When a long series of conservative governments led mostly by Karamanlis and backed by an anti-communist state was interrupted by the electoral victories of the center-left in 1963-64, the country entered a period of protracted crisis. As had been the case earlier in the rest of Southern Europe, the conservative ultras in Greece mounted a military coup in 1967, putting an end to formal democracy and persecuting radical leftists, moderate centrists, and moderate conservatives alike. Despite their relative victimization by the

15 Juan J. Linz, *Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 30.

dictators, the latter would not find it easy to establish their democratic credentials although, in the meantime, they had become the actual champions of democracy.

The authoritarian experience in Southern Europe charged "conservatism" with pejorative meaning. For large social segments, conservative politics simply became "the Right" and, in everyday parlance, this came to mean something derogatory. In reality, however, authoritarianism had managed to split the conservatibe universe into two parts, one extremist and reactionary, the other moderate and reformist, which would thereafter make strange bedfellows. After the collapse of the dictatorships, when Italy, Greece and Spain were back on the democratic track, and as the surviving conservatives were trying to jettison their reactionary past and establish a new consensus, they discovered that they lacked a common and legitimate historical experience to which they could make reference. Quite certainly, this was "a somewhat paradoxical state of affairs for a political ideology which values tradition as an essential symbolic element".[16]

3. From authoritarian conservatism to conservative democracies: Genetic traits and hereditary constraints

Notwithstanding their other dissimilarities, the democratic transitions in Italy, Greece and Spain shared two features that are often overlooked, but which became of key importance in subsequent political developments. None was violently overthrown by mass or other external action; also, it was conservative, not radical forces, that assumed power there immediately after dictatorial collapse. It bears repetition, in none of our three countries did the new conservative leaders come out of a clear political sky. In the immediate post-authoritarian environment, no conservative leader was really new. They

16 Ramón Garcia Cotarelo and Lourdes Lopez Nieto, "Spanish Conservatism, 1976-87" in *West European Politics* 11:2 (April 1988), 80.

all had a political history and roots in previous regimes (be they crippled democracies, as in Italy and Greece, or Spain's dying dictatorship). What was new was that, as is the case in all democracies, the cost of repression by that time far exceeded the cost of toleration, and the cost of exclusion seemed much higher than that of political inclusion. All conservative leaders, therefore, felt for the first time obliged to abandon traditional immobilism and exclusionary politics, and take the initiative to providing their societies with new incorporative political institutions. Uncomfortable as such a situation may have been for them, fear of historical obsolescence was, to be sure, stronger than the strains of political adaptation. What follows is an explanation of the common features of democratic transition in Italy, Greece and Spain (in contrast to the Portuguese case), and then a short account of the founding of each country's main conservative party. Finally, I shall describe the main themes, as well as the objectives of the conservative democratic program in the early post-authoritarian years.

The first common characteristic of the democratic transitions in Italy, Greece and Spain is that nowhere did an authoritarian regime come down through protracted mass unrest or popular revolution.[17] Nowhere were previous authoritarian regimes overthrown by their "natural" enemies; they simply collapsed (or, in the case of Spain, became self-liquidated) under the weight of their own faults, deficiencies, or limitations. Italy (1943) and Greece (1974) present the simplest cases since there the reactionary social order passed into history after defeat in war or military folly respectively. Only in Italy was the left in a position to mobilize the masses against the initiatives of the conservative Christian Democrats and potentially capable of capturing power—a possibility that was to a large extent annulled by Togliatti's initially

17 It is worth recalling in this respect Huntington's claim that "democratic regimes that last have seldom, if ever, been instituted by mass popular action"; Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?", *Political Science Qarterly* 99:2 (Summer 1984), 212.

conciliatory strategy. In Spain, Francoism was dismantled piecemeal within a period of several months after its founder's death (1975) by the very individuals who had been entrusted with its preservation. The transition to democracy took place in a climate of relative political moderation where the main political actors exchanged reciprocal concessions and made pacts. The formerly clandestine Communist Party simply acquiesced to the process.

The second shared feature after the collapse of authoritarian rule in Italy, Greece, and Spain was the leadership given by old conservative forces (political as well as social; secular as well as clerical) that formed into parties and undertook the task of reinstituting democracies and making them work. The phenomenon can be seen most clearly in Greece, this partly due to the shortness of the authoritarian interlude and partly to the paralysis of all other potential candidates for supremacy (e.g., the army, the palace, or the church). The end of authoritarian rule thus made possible the transfer of power *within* the broader conservative bloc. Be that as it may, in the collective political consciousness of Greeks at transition time, Karamanlis had remained the former leader of the pre-dictatorship right-wing ERE. In Italy, the interwar Partito Popolare was suppressed in 1926 and yet "the work of Catholic Action went on and during those years [1926-1943] the men and women were formed who helped in the reconstruction of Christian Democracy in Italy after the War".[18] In point of fact, the founding Christian Democrats drew their roots from the Partito Popolare and, to a lesser extent, from the Catholic anti-fascist struggle led by Pietro Malvestiti. However, the DC became the dominant mass party aided by the unreserved support of the Catholic Church, itself Italy's most conservative institution. Things appear to be simpler in Spain where gradualism in regime change offered those who were "intimately involved with Francoism" a chance to play the crucial role of transferring the old, even

18 John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy: Partito Popolare 1919-1926* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 199.

if partially modified, loyalties to the regime already in the making.[19] Until the Socialists won the elections of 1981, state power in Spain remained almost completely in the hands of leading figures from the antecedent regime. It was they, rather than outsiders, who, unable anymore to preserve Francoism's obsolete legacy, found it necessary to liquidate it.

It may well be said then that, considering the circumstances, it became the historical task of the conservatives to establish and reinforce the new democracies. Their success would depend heavily on the political parties they managed to create, to the genesis of which I now turn my attention.

The Italian DC was a successor party, in a non-linear order, to the interwar Partito Popolare, which disintegrated because of internal dissentions but also due to the fact that the Vatican had come to terms with Benito Mussolini. The freezing by the dictator of all party opposition in 1926 gave the deathblow to that early conservative formation. The modern party of Christian Democracy was founded in September 1942 at the house of the Milanese steel magnate Enrico Falck.[20] The founders included a few old Popolare leaders (among them Alcide De Gasperi, who had been the last secretary general of that party) and some Catholic anti-fascists. They would soon be joined by members of the Catholic Graduate Association, including the future party leaders Aldo Moro and Giulio Andreotti. The main common characteristic of that assembly of political forces was strong hostility to fascism as well as communism, and an equally strong attachment to the Catholic church and traditional values. The church returned the courtesy by providing the newly-born party with members, legitimation and sponsoring. As the forces of the Resistance had

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19 See Edward Malefakis, "Spain and its Francoist Heritage", in John H. Herz (ed.), *From Dictatorship to Democracy: Coping with the Legacies of Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1982), esp. 215-16 for a discussion of the main consequences of the lack in Spain of a sharp break with the past.

20 Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics*, 1943-1988 (London: Penguin, 1990), 48.

started gathering force, the Vatican abandoned in 1943 its earlier ideas of supporting a solution for Italy similar to Francoism. And, despite several misgivings, Pius XII decided to throw his support behind the nascent DC and helped to transform it from a mere "talking shop into a mass party".[21]

In Greece, the decision to create a new party instead of revitalizing the pre-dictatorship ERE was indicative of Karamanlis's intentions. Only a few weeks after the reinstitution of democracy and still in an almost perfect vacuum of power, the former leader of the postwar right invited to his private apartment in Athens a group of political associates and confidants to announce his decisions. Among the invitees were Constantine Tsatsos, Panaghis Papaligouras, and Evangelos Averoff, all former ERE strongmen and destined to play important political roles in the future. As with DC's founding, the common denominator of all participants was their strong anti-communism and a solid preference for the virtues of non-excessive democracy. However, the initial legitimacy of the ND was of an altogether different kind. If the DC was established by the aid of a single religious institution, the ND was created (and therefore initially legitimated) by a single person, Constantine Karamanlis. For many years thereafter, this party would remain heavily dependent for legitimacy and reassurance on its founder's charisma.[22]

The creation of UCD in Spain had a rather more arduous development. This party was the final outcome of the continuous transformations since 1973 when the reformists belonging to the *Tácito* group, in alliance with old *aperturistas* like Pío Cabanillas and José María Areizla, became the Partido

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21 *Ibid.*, 50.

22 There is no denying that Alcide De Gasperi and Adolfo Suárez proved outstanding statesmen and enjoyed enormous political prestige. Yet, only Karamanlis possessed charisma in the sense that this involved the delegation of power by a group to its authorized representative precisely in order to set new rules, this way redefining the accepted framework of politics. To use Panebianco's key words, while Karamanlis was perfectly able to "impose" his decisions upon *his* party, De Gasperi and Suárez were obliged to "bargain" with many other forces and political actors. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 52.

Popular, and then, through the fusion of more smaller groups, the Centro Democrático.[23] It was only when Adolfo Suárez, that "well-groomed member of the old Francoist elite",[24] decided to enter the centrist coalition shortly before the first democratic elections of June 1977 that the UCD was born. Sensing that the King's support was not sufficient, and also that he needed a popular base in society, the Prime Minister traded his enormous personal prestige with a party still in the making. Inevitably, the political center was to be transformed once more. The team of men from the old Movimiento that Suárez brought with him shared his reformist ideas and became instrumental in closing the gap within the new party between franquistas and anti-franquistas. Unlike its conservative kindred in Italy and Greece, however, UCD lacked a long-term logic of its own that would have enabled it to create enduring organizational structures and, perhaps, enjoy a longer life than the one it actually did. For, in reality, the Spanish conservative party always remained "first and foremost an organization set up by those in power with the purpose of preserving that power".[25] As of the Alianza Popular, its creation was not at all different from that of the other conservative parties in Southern Europe. It originated from above, lacked both a coherent ideology and broad social legitimacy, and, in order to survive, it had to develop party organization structures. And yet it was unique in at least one crucial respect. Unlike most other major conservative parties in the region (the other exception being the Social Democrats in Portugal), the AP did not become a governing party at the time of its creation, nor, until recently, could it credibly expect to win power. This party presents therefore a very important case because, although almost doomed to be a permanent opposition, it succeeded

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23 For these processes, see Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani and Goldie Shabad, *Spain After Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 92-96.

24 Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurua, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 217

25 José Amodia, "Union of the Democratic Centre", in David S. Bell (ed.), *Democratic Politics in Spain: Spanish Politics After Franco* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983), 7

in more than simply remaining alive; having managed to develop an impressive and firmly institutionalized party organization, the AP, renamed in the meantime the Partido Popular, seems at last ready to win office for the first time.

To sum up, as had already been the case with their respective democratizations, the creation of the new conservative parties in Italy, Greece and Spain did not originate at society's level. DC, ND, UCD, and AP/PP were conceived and come into political being from above, that is, by former conservative leaders and without the presence of significant pressures from below. All were founded amidst acute political crises, and (with the exception of the UCD) in power vacuums. All promised to fully concede to democracy and pledged no relation to sinister pasts. All were deeply anti-communist. None of those traits was however enough to keep them in power; the new conservatives were in need, more than anything else, of a brand new political program.

In transitory political systems that are also exposed to the dangers of sudden and high mass mobilization, conservative forces can hardly retain their intuitive inflexibility. Often in such cases, especially when those conservatives also happen to hold office, they find it necessary to turn reformist. The European South offers excellent cases to testify the foregoing. The political conservatism that grew in the region after the collapse of dictatorships owes its distinctiveness to two factors, the impact of democratic transitions themselves, which prompted change instead of nourishing stability, and the emergence for the first time of highly politicized societies, which demanded reform instead of falling back on tradition. To discount societies as an irrelevant entity proved no less impossible than ignoring the dynamics of transition. Thus, unable to arrest change any longer, post-authoritarian conservatives rather sought to discipline it.

In all new democracies in Southern Europe the loudest (and more legitimacy-sensitive) demands were raised in the fields of political participation and social equality. The breakdown of dictatorships had rendered the practices of coercion and exclusion obsolete, and dramatically revealed deep social inequalities. Immediately after democratic transitions, the conservative forces in Southern Europe found themselves for the first time in their long political histories, in pressing need of providing two institutions they had never been quite at ease with, that is competitive political parties and generalized social welfare. It became therefore inevitable that, in order to establish new consensus in society, and in the face of strenuous opposition from both left and right, the goal of the conservative governments in Italy, Greece and Spain was to organize democratic polities capable of incorporating all groups in society and pacifying social conflict. These became the two components of the conservative democratic program. Incorporating society requires building strong parties, allowing them to organize autonomously from the state, formulating workable electoral laws, and encouraging social participation. Reducing tensions in society requires growing economies, solvent states, efficient allocation of resources, increasing opportunities and reducing inequality.

Once in power again, the main concern for the conservative governments in Italy, Greece and Spain became *regulated* democracy, not democracy unlimited, all-permissive, at any cost. The issue was, in other words, how to establish (and make functional) moderate democracies in immoderate political conditions while, moreover, retaining political dominance.[26] If this project was to succeed, it became imperative to bring citizens—sometimes caught for generations in authority systems that had been fundamentally non-

26 For Italy, see P. Scoppola, *La Proposta Politica di De Gasperi* (Bologna, Il Muilno, 1977); for Greece see mine, The Making of Party Democracy in Greece (Ph. D. thesis, Yale University, 1995), esp. chapter 2.

participatory—into the new systems which were intended to accommodate only moderate and orderly participation. Heirs to a Madisonian (rather than Rousseauistic) conception of democracy,[27] Alcide De Gasperi, Constantine Karamanlis, and Adolfo Suárez showed a clear preference to a relatively restrained type of democratic regime in which the main task of the people is to periodically control officials through elections, *and no more*. They all knew well that modern conservatism could no longer have resort to the tactics of the past. This simple realization represents for conservative thinking a momentous turning point. The new logic ensured that "[T]he outs are in, or must be brought in. The 'masses' not only cannot be kept out indefinitely, but it is useful to involve them. [For] if their emnity is dangerous, their indifference is wasteful."[28]

All things considered, the Christian Democrats (DC) in Italy, the New Democrats (ND) in Greece, and the Centrist Union Democrats (UCD) in Spain, all governing parties in nascent democracies, became the most important means for the success of the conservative political programs in their respective country. In the new political context, the ruling conservatives exerted themselves to both incorporate societies in the sphere of politics *and* appease them as far as social demands were concerned. To be in a position to do so, they needed to provide strong (and institutionalized) political party organizations and supply sufficient (and universal) state welfare policies. In the following sections we shall explore in some detail these priorities of conservative strategy, namely the creation of party organizations (section 4) and the delivery of welfare benefits (section 5). My contention is that both components were necessary (but not sufficient) if the conservative strategy was to succeed. More important, they were anything but unrelated to each other

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27 Cf. William H. Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1982).

28 Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 41.

since welfare policy mainly involved resources generated at state level and delivered through the ruling political parties. It seems therefore necessary to examine the interrelations between the conservative parties and the state, as well as the extent to which this affected the success of the conservative program (section 6). After exploring these problem areas, I shall amend my analytical framework by introducing democratic legitimacy as an overall control variable for the success or failure of the conservatives in power (section 7).

4. The first component of conservative strategy: Political incorporation through party organizations

Notwithstanding the almost century-long delay, democratic transitions in Southern Europe promoted the organization of the region's conservative forces in party form in a similar way that the Reform Act of 1867 had served Britain's Conservative Party. Indeed, in both cases "[T]he advent of democracy shattered the old framework of political society", and made necessary "the methodical organization of the electoral masses ... in the form of disciplined and permanent parties".[29] The difference was, however, that not all southern European conservative parties could provide their own Disraelis for "stealing the Whigs' clothes" with success.

Democratization caused in Italy, Greece, and Spain an increase of checks at state level and a concomitant decrease of balances at the level of society. The repercussions of those developments were serious especially for the governing conservatives, given that, in the new political environment, they were set for the first time over against open societies without themselves having unlimited resort to the state or unaccountable accesss to state resources. Under

29 M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, [1902] 1970), 1:3.

the new conditions (and especially where polarization reached high levels, as in Italy and Greece), conservative forces had a clear interest in organizing strong party machineries, and mobilizing the support of large as well as active memberships both during and between elections. Instead of the historically passé coercion, it was now political parties that were deemed necessary for performing the double function of incorporating the once again mobilizing masses and accommodating them in the new democratic design.[30] For the conservatives, it was the first time that political parties became central to organizing civil societies. Nonetheless, anti-party traditions and inherited habits were reflected clearly in the aggregative capacities of the modern conservative parties.

In Italy, the church did more than provide external legitimacy for the Christian Democrats. Its vast network of religious associations, the local parish clergy, and Azione Cattolica, the church's main lay organization all spoke in favor of DC to the (apparently inter-class) masses of religious men and women who flocked to Italy's churches every Sunday. Alongside these church-sponsored organizations, the party developed its own network of supports in society. Most important among them were the Coldiretti, an association of peasant proprietors founded by Paolo Bonomi, ACLI, the Association of Christian Workers, and Luigi Gedda's civic committees which had an extraordinary influence in Italian society in favor of the Christian Democrats. For Bardi and Morlino "the development of this party organizational network [was], in the final analysis, one of the most characteristic features of democratic

30 Witness, for instance, Karamanlis' rationale, which was quite typical of all conservative leaders in post-authoritarian southern Europe: "[In order for the moderate conservatives to keep democracy secure] they need both to be alert and able to rally the people around powerful political formations, [which alone can] not only protect democracy from communism and fascism, but also [avert] the causes that may have occassioned its breakdown in the past." Proclamation on the Foundation of ND, 30 September, 1974 (my translation).

consolidation in Italy".[31] Thanks to this church support, DC enjoyed a rapid growth, numbering already in 1945 more than half a million members.[32] It may therefore seem prima facie paradoxical that both De Gasperi and Fanfani wanted to reinforce DC's organization and make it more autonomous from the church. The electoral failure of 1953 proved them just far-sighted. The Christian Democrats' poor performance at the polls (party support dropped by eight percentage points) was mainly due to continuing reliance on the church organizations and lack of effectiveness when compared to that of their political opponents. In the following year, Amintore Fanfani, a determined if somewhat abrasive personality, became secretary of the party and immediately set about revitalizing it. Under his secretaryship, the DC underwent a radical transformation from a typical denominational political force into a secular and uncofessional mass party. Fanfani's vigorous efforts yielded impressive results in terms of membership (by the end of his first secretaryship in 1959 it had exceeded 1.5 million) but were only partially successful in providing the party with a central bureaucracy and territorial diffusion so as to effectively eliminate its heavy dependence on external organizations and other political brokers. Thus, even after party reorganization, DC's institutionalization remained limited.[33] There then followed the crisis of the centrist government formula and Italian politics entered an era of center-left coalition governments. Despite numerous attempts at "refoundation", DC failed to undergo significant organizational changes. Intense intra-party factionalism led to the temporary loss of DC's political dominance. Organizational reforms were once more put on the party agenda in the mid-1970s and early 1980s,

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31 Luciano Bardi and Leonardo Morlino, "Italy: Tracing the Roots of the Great Transformation", in Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies* (London: Sage, 1994), 244.

32 Among many sources on the growth of the DC membership until the late 1980s, see in particular Robert Leonardi and Douglas A. Wertman, *Italian Christian Democracy: The Politics of Dominance* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 127.

33 Panebianco, *Political Parties*, 65, 128. Bardi and Morlino, "Italy: Tracing the Roots of the Great Transformation", 245.

largely coinciding with the secretaryships of Benigno Zaccagnini and Ciriaco De Mita respectively.[34] But again, the effort to overcome the power of factional leaders and increase the participation of the rank-and-file was in vain. In the meantime, the formerly strong ancillary party organizations originating from the Catholic subculture had progressively become weak or lost their relevance. Catholic Action, the Coldiretti, and the ACLI, suffered large membership drops and internal splits. And yet, DC remained a mass party maintaining relatively high levels of party membership at least until 1990. In 1992, the new Party Secretary, Mino Martinazzoli made a last-ditch effort to "refound" the party. This attempt was too little and came too late. After almost half a century of political dominance, the DC certainly did not cease being a permanent governing party (and upholder of a compact conservative design) because it lacked organization. The disastrous losses in the 1993 elections and the final dissolution of the party in January 1994 were rather due to the dismantling of the hitherto established political system—a system which DC had played the principal role in creating and keeping alive.

The story of the Greek ND's organizational development in the 1970s is the laborious process of balancing a surplus of charisma at the top with serious deficits at the party institutional level. ND presents a rare case of a governing party that acquired formal organizational structures under the initial aegis of its charismatic leader. Like De Gaulle in 1958, Karamanlis in 1974 enjoyed an enormous amount of charismatic authority and yet, unlike the French leader, he decided to follow the example of non-charismatic De Gasperi in his determination to build a solid organization for his party. Karamanlis was fully aware that the stability of the regime depended to a large degree to the existence of strong political parties for both producing effective governments

34 By 1973 DC appears for the first time to have more members than the communist PCI. A new growth of members was experienced under De Mita's secretaryship between 1982 and 1986. Leonardi and Wertman, *Italian Christian Democracy*, 146.

and incorporating a politically awakened civil society. That, of course, was the theory. In practice, the early attempts at party organization were seriously impeded by the leader's charisma, the party's incumbency in office, and the presence of powerful notables. Yet, throughout the whole period of Karamanlis' leadership, the tendency within the ND was towards eliminating autonomous centers of intraparty power while at the same time promoting mass-party organizational forms. The political design proposed by the ND necessitated incorporating the previously excluded masses in an orderly and enduring way.[35] To be in a position to do so, it was understood that "a political party cannot exist for any reasonable length of time unless it is democratically organized so as not to identify its own fate with that of its leader".[36] In this frame of mind, rather than intending the ND as a mere vehicle of his personal ambitions, Karamanlis undertook the task of creating a workable party machine for upholding and reinforcing his political design. As early as April 1977, a preliminary party congress produced a formal charter to regulate the party's inner life. Two years later, Karamanlis hastened to convene the first ND Congress in a deliberate effort to promote the "routinization of charisma" within the party.[37] The major novelty of the new party charter was the reinforcement of power in the party parliamentary group and the introduction of controls on those aspiring to the party leadership after the departure of Karamanlis which took place in 1980 and meant for the party a sharp decline in charisma and a concomitant decrease in voter appeal. In the new post-Karamanlis environment, the theoretical justification for the need of rigid organizational structures started to change. Faced for the first time since the transition to democracy with the gloomy prospect of losing office and

35 Takis S. Pappas, "'New Democracy': Party Development and Organization Logics", in Piero Ignazi (ed.), *Party Organization in Southern Europe* (New York: Greenwood, forthcoming).

36 Constantine Karamanlis, Speech at the Preliminary Congress of ND, 2 April 1977.

37 In Weberian parlance, this involves the transformation of charismatic authority from its purest form (i.e., personal and extraordinary power) into a more permanent structure characterized by impersonal and "routinized' authority.

under the mounting competition from PASOK, emphasis in the ND organization shifted from intra-party affairs to inter-party conflict and from institutional formalism to electoral mobilization. When the ND lost the general elections of 1981, its party organization proved that it was more than an empty shell. The party had in fact been institutionalized and, unlike the UCD in a similar situation, did not disintegrate. To the contrary, it responded with one more change in party leadership (Evangelos Averoff replacing Rallis) and continuous development of its party organization.

At formation time, the Union of the Democratic Center had no dependence on any external sponsor organizations and also lacked a charismatic leader. Instead, it was a product of diffusion caused by the federation of pre-existing political formations.[38] After the 1977 general elections in Spain, the UCD made an effort to become something more than a motley collection of political families—Christian democrat, social democrat, liberal, independent reformist, former Francoist—coordinated from above simply for electoral purposes. In December of that year, the various groups within the coalition formally dissolved and UCD became a single party with some of the organizational traits of a mass party, such as an executive committee and party branches throughout the country.[39] Yet, it never ceased relying for organizational support and resources principally on three sources: the popularity of its leader, the network of local notables (caciquismo in fact remained one of the most persistent characteristics of Spanish political life), and the government's control over state television. The first UCD Congress in 1978 further centralized party leadership by effectively introducing a presidential structure that unified all the coalition partners from the constituent period. But this did not give vent to internal conflicts and dissenting voices, nor did it manage to

38 Here I use "diffusion" in Panebianco's own sense, *Political Parties*, 51, 65.

39 By 1981, the UCD had managed to attract 144,000 party members, a number higher than that of the socialist PSOE. Gunther et al., *Spain After Franco*, 138.

coordinate the various groups in a better way. On the other hand, the leader failed to offer organizational incentives to the party rank-and-file or broaden the structure of political opportunities. The passing of the Constitution at the end of 1978 "effectively marked the achievement of Suarez's political project, leaving him without a clear set of objectives".[40] The leader became a mixed blessing. Though still popular, Suárez was non-charismatic, and his marriage with UCD was one of political convenience. The leader offered the party his personal popularity, and the party (the most liberal groups within it in particular) reciprocated by providing the leader with much-needed democratic legitimacy. As it turned out, Suárez took greater advantage of the party than it did of him. Reduced to being a personal political vehicle for its leader's ambitions, the party failed completely to institutionalize an organization that could secure a viable future for itself.[41] Strained internally by the heterogeneity of its constituent groups, lacking external supports other than the state, and dominated by a leader without charismatic qualities, the UCD finally exploded. A series of political setbacks in 1979 and 1980 (the elections for the autonomous Basque and Catalan parliaments, the Andalusian referendum, and a censure motion in 1980) led Suárez to resign in January 1981. As Hopkin attests, "[T]he decline of Adolfo Suárez's leadership brought the collapse of a model of party management which had emerged out of his initial dominance of the organisation, and which depended on his continued dominance to function effectively".[42] Immediately afterwards, the party abandoned the presidential system and separated the posts of parliamentary leader (which was assumed by Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo) and party leader (which

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40 Jonathan Hopkin, Party Development and Party Collapse: The Case of Union De Centro Democratico in Post-Franco Spain (Ph. D. thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 1995), 232.

41 J. Figuero captures nicely the situation by entitling his study on this party *UCD: La Empresa Que Creó Adolfo Suárez; Historia, Sociología y Familias del Suarismo* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1981) [UCD: The Business Enterprise Created by Adolfo Suárez; History, Sociology and the Families of Suarism]; cited in Amodia, "Union of the Democratic Centre", 12.

42 Hopkin, Party Development and Party Collapse, 232.

remained in the hands of men loyal to Suárez). Worse was yet to come. After a few months the party split, and while the social democratic component went over to the Socialists its more conservative sectors moved in the opposite direction towards the right-wing AP. Certain Christian democratic sections formed their own party (Partido Democratico Popular), which would later form a coalition with the AP. Suárez and his followers also created a new centrist party, the Social and Democratic Center (CDS) that was not destined to have a bright future either. Calvo Sotelo failed to rescue UCD from defeat in the general elections of 1982 and, eventually, complete disappearance. Shortly before the national elections of 1982, the UCD seemed to be totally eclipsed by Fraga's conservative AP.[43] Thenceforth, the latter would become yet another incarnation of conservatism in Spain.

The Alianza Popular was founded at the end of 1976 by Manuel Fraga heading a coalition of former Francoist ministers and this continuity from the previous regime would remain that party's most serious and permanent liability. AP's first three years were spent in an effort to moderate the party image, as well as to formulate an appropriate party-building strategy. The 1979 electoral outcome was a serious setback given that its electoral support fell to just 6.1 percent of the total vote. Ironically, it was electoral defeat that gave the party a new life. As the UCD started disintegrating, the AP conservatives began an extensive process of organizational growth. During its Third National Congress held in December 1979, the party became strictly presidential, eliminated many ideological inconsistencies of the past, and developed a new electoral strategy formulated around the concept of "natural majority".[44] Competent organization had become a constant preoccupation of the party

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43 Jonathan Marcus, "The Triumph of Spanish Socialism: The 1982 Election," *West European Politics* 6:3 (July 1983): 281-86.

44 José Ramón Montero, "Los Fracasos Políticos y Electorales de la Derecha Española: Alianza Popular, 1976-1986", *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociologicas*, 39 (Julio-Septiembre, 1987), 15.

leadership as the best means of mobilizing mass support and winning elections. In 1982 membership stood at 100,000, and in 1986 it reached 222.000.[45] Yet, the electoral results in both years were disappointing. Despite significant transfers by the Spanish voters of political allegiance to the coalition led by the AP, the latter remained in opposition. However, party activity was never relaxed.[46] More importantly, the party underwent two leadership changes (Antonio Mancha in 1987 and José María Aznar in 1989) and announced its "re-foundation" in a clear attempt to present a more centrist image. In 1989 it also changed its name into Partido Popular (PP).

The foregoing alert us to two things with respect to the interrelated processes of party building and democracy making. The first is that the major conservative parties in Southern Europe developed in different ways. Italy's Christian Democrats owe their consolidation as a party to the existence of an external sponsor institution. In Greece, the single most decisive factor for conservative party-building was the presence of charismatic leadership. The Spanish conservative parties were created through diffusion of elites.[47] However distinct their circumstances, all conservative parties facilitated participation. They provided the new democracies major avenues for bringing the people into politics. Their party organizations helped enlist mass support and mediate claims and demands coming from society's side to the state.

5. The second component of conservative strategy: Social conflict mediation through state welfarism

45 Cotarelo and Lopez Nieto, "Spanish Conservatism, 1976-87", 88.

46 Displaying extraordinary activism for a conservative party, the AP has called no less than eleven party congresses from its foundation in 1976 until 1993. For details of the party's organizational growth, see Lourdes Lopez Nieto, "The Party Mechanism: The Organization and Operations of the AP/PP Political Party", in Ignazi (ed.), *Party Organization in Southern Europe*, forthcoming.

47 For an analysis of the factors affecting party formation and party development, see Panebianco, *Political Parties*, 50-53.

Demand for political participation was only one of the two great consequences brought about by the advent of democracies and the emergence of civil societies in Southern Europe; the other was the rise of expectations in the social and economic fields—expressed as strong requests for fairness and equity. Compared to the former exclusive systems that had been either indifferent or unable to satisfy this sort of demands,[48] the new conservative projects, by aiming at societal reconciliation, became to a large extent dependent for their success upon the satisfactory delivery of welfare programs.

When authoritarianism collapsed, the economies of Italy, Greece and Spain were in a sorry state. Though in different mixes, they all suffered from inflation and large trade deficits; obsolete industries and low levels of production; antiquated agricultural sectors and inefficient bureaucracies; high unemployment and declining investments. Under those conditions, the double challenge facing all conservative governments in Southern Europe was to promote economic growth and to decrease social inequalities. Each opted for economic programs of an essentially Keynesian conception designed along two axes. The first entailed a strong state capable of organizing the general workings of the economy and regulating it against cyclical crises; the second axis included generous socioeconomic redistributions favoring those with lower incomes. This strategy, which was intended to produce "a kind of economistic sublimation of politics",[49] seemed at the time wise from the political point of view and rational from the economic point of view.

Contrary to the original design, however, it was redistribution, not economic development, that became the more important. Economic rationality thus fell an easy victim to political expediency. The dilemma facing these conservative

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48 With the partial exception, it should be noted, of the corporatist welfare state in interwar Italy.

49 Gianfranco Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 139.

governments was, in Maravall's words, "either taking their country on a long and painful road toward economic efficiency and long-term growth, with dubious prospects of economic or political success and postponing the rewards that many people expected from democracy, or attempting to respond to more immediate political and social needs, delaying the implementation of economic reforms and hoping the economy could muddle through".[50] Typically enough, conservatives everywhere, instead of aiming at a reformist "economicization of politics" that would have allowed the state to play the leading role in the economy, subscribed to a conformist "politicization of economics". Strictly political considerations prevailed over general economic ones, and catering to the needs of different sections of electorates acquired primacy over general economic planning. The picture comes out quite clearly if we measure welfare policies by (a) public spending as a share of GDP and (b) increases in the size of the public-controlled sectors in the economies. To be sure, such random welfarism made sense to the masses, but was senseless in terms of the overall economic processes since those took place without regard for macroeconomic hierarchies. Throughout the years of conservative political dominance, instead of bold structural reforms to redress economies, it was the unproductive sectors of states and public expenditures that increased at a fast rate.

A remark is in order. It has often been argued that the advancement of social policies in Italy has been a "distinctively Christian democratic" and "religiously inspired" phenomenon upon which the dominant DC capitalized in order to pursue its conservative political project.[51] Yet, to say that the

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50 José María Maravall, "Politics and Policy: Economic Reforms in Southern Europe", in Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, José María Maravall, and Adam Przeworski (eds.), *Economic Reforms in New Democracies: A Social-Democratic Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80.

51 For a recent exposition of this idea, see Kees van Kersbergen, *Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 177 and passim.

"social capitalistic" reformism pursued by the DC was merely related to religious ideals does not explain the pursuit of similar policies in comparable political conditions by the non-confessional ND or the non-predominantly-Catholic UCD. A more convincing answer lies, I think, in the strictly political predicaments all conservative parties in the countries under examination faced, and which revolved around the double issue of mitigating the impact of suddden popular mobilization and placating the political opposition. In the new democracies, the achievement of social equality and justice through state intervention appeared as new elements to conservative thinking. In Greece, for instance, the promotion of social justice became, inter alia, one of the main principles and ideological themes of the ND.[52] Similarly, the UCD also stressed the principle of social equality, emphasizing "the obligation of the public authorities to assure the predominance of the common interest over individual interests as well as the fundamental services of a modern society, and to guarantee justice and social equality".[53] The following statement minister Ugo La Malfa included in a 'supplementary note' in the 1962 Italian budget best depicts the understanding of the welfare state and its tasks by the Southern conservatives:

> In order to guarantee to *everyone* a decent standard of living, the direct intervention of the state must be strengthened ... Under state authority are in fact (besides education) health assistance—which must be adequate and effective *for all citizens, regardless of their financial conditions*—and social insurance, which must guarantee *everyone* a minimum security *for life*.[54]

Paradoxical as it may have been for conservative parties, there was a strong ethos of social democracy, not of neocapitalism, "resonating" in the government programs of southern European conservatives.[55] There is a

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52 Cf. *The Ideological Principles of New Democracy* (in Greek) (Athens: New Democracy, 1975).

53 *La Solución a Un Reto: UCD. Tesis Para Una Sociedad Democrática Occidental* (Madrid: Unión Editorial, 1979), quoted in Luis García San Miguel, "The Ideology of the Unión de Centro Democrático", *European Journal of Political Research* 9 (1981): 443.

54 Quoted in Maurizio Ferrera, "Italy", in Peter Flora (ed.), *Growth To Limits: The Western European States Since World War II* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 2:392 (emphases added).

55 San Miguel, "The Ideology of the Unión de Centro Democrático", 444.

catch. While in the social democratic model the aim is the reallocation of risks by way of state-undertaken general economic reforms, "equality" in the Southern European countries mostly referred to the state-initiated redistribution of wealth through particularistic policies.[56] Equality in Southern Europe was perceived to derive, not indirectly through economic politics, but directly through state action and especially state social policies.

In the aftermath of the 1948 elections, a victorious De Gasperi promised to carry out the social policy reforms to which he was pledged. Social reformism and the quest for social justice, accompanied by appropriate policies, remained prominent on the conservative political agenda.[57] The agrarian reform laws of 1950, providing for land expropriations and their subsequent redistribution to sharecropping farmers and other small peasants, were only the first step towards that direction. Despite high political immobilism during the 1950s, that decade was crucial in that the Christian Democrats managed to reinforce their hold on the state and to create a new consensus in Italian society. The institution of the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno was perhaps the most characteristic example of such tactics. The Cassa (fund) was an extensive undertaking of public-works and infrastructure-building projects especially concentrated in rural areas. By increasing investment and stimulating economic growth in underpriviledged areas, the Christian Democrats had hoped to achieve more than the indirect redistribution of wealth and consumption rise. Above all, they had also expected to mediate growing social protest. The application of social policies, especially related to welfare extension, regional development, and full employment, continued into the following decade despite the economic recession of the years 1964-5.

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56 Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

57 Maurizio Ferrera, *Il Welfare State in Italia: Sviluppo a Crisi in Prospettiva Comparata* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984)

The political realignments of the 1960s did not halt Italy's idiosyncratic state welfarism. On the contrary, it was center-left governments that carried out the nationalization of the electric power industry and the more egalitarian education reforms in the early 1960s. Later in the same decade, and after mass protests, the Christian Democrats agreed to grand generous social pensions. At around the same time, an extensive reform of the national health service introduced the general insurance scheme in place of a more fragmented system. The extension of social rights and welfare spending continued into the 1970s and the 1980s (the biggest items remaining education, health provision, and the pensions), causing an ever-rising public-sector deficit. Public spending and public employment increased dramatically throughout the whole era of conservative dominance in Italy. The growth of public expenditure as a percentage of GDP increased from 24.8 percent in 1951 to 45.7 percent in 1980 following a more or less linear trend.[58] The major component of public spending has been social expenditure, its share of GDP rising from 13 to almost 27 percent, and sometimes, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, growing at a faster rate than real GDP.[59] State employment increased in the post-war period at a pace similar to that of public expenditure. From 10.3 percent employed in the public sector in 1951, their numbers had more than doubled in 1976, reaching 22 percent of the Italian labor force.[60]

In Greece and Spain, the importance of political considerations at the relative expense of economic rationality was similarly evident in the reforms undertaken by the ruling conservative after democratic transitions. In these two countries structural problems were worsened by the consecutive oil-price

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58 Ferrera, "Italy", 393-4. According to different sources, perhaps somewhat excessive, public expenditure had risen in Italy by 1982 to no less than 55 percent of GDP, the highest of all major western European countries; Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 354.

59 Ferrera, *ibid.*, 395, 443 and passim. The most important items within social expenditure have been those concerning income maintenance (with pensions figuring most prominently), health and education, as well as the various forms of public assiatance (including housing).

60 *Ibid.*, 396.

shocks of the 1970s. The ever rising cost of oil increased the already uncompetitive costs of production, squeezed profits, and forced many industrial firms out of business. As foreign debts mounted, unemployment, which had been low in earlier years, now emerged as a new threat. The response to crisis of the Greek ND is perhaps the most telling because, unlike its counterparts in Italy or Spain, this party had been able to form strong majoritarian governments, which means that the ND decided to make the generous social and economic concessions it made deliberately, that is without being pressed by the (at leat numerically, incommensurate) opposition. Under the weight of demands for increased social welfare and more equality, the Karamanlis government applied a massive program of nationalizations in the economy, thus bringing under state control many key industries, as well as the banks and telecommunications. In addition, the ND set up a consortium of state-owned banks in order to stimulate investment in those areas where private capital was failing.[61] State resources were then used to finance the budgets for education, health insurance, and social security.

The picture was not very different in Spain. Leading a minoritarian government, Suárez was in a less favorable condititon than Karamanlis in Greece, but was still able to strike successful deals over social and economic policies with the political opposition. Democratization caused a wave of social demands that included the satisfaction of material (e.g., wages), as well as non-material (e.g., education) rights. In trying to respond to such an upsurge of demands, the Spanish government, like the Greek and the Italian ones, encouraged the extension of socioeconomic rights and state expansion. As Castles notes, "the government that presided over the really significant

61 To the stated explanation of ND's leader, those "bold interventions [were] within the limits of a market economy [and not implemented] out of dogmatism but because the social and economic conditions made them necessary" Constantine Karamanlis, Speech at the First Congress of ND, 5 May 1979.

expansion of the welfare state [in Spain] was the Suárez administration".[62] If we take up again now the two main themes underlying the emergence of the welfare state in Greece and Spain, namely public expenditure and expansion of the state-controlled sector, we see between them both similarities and differences. In terms of public spending, first, both countries followed a similar pattern of spectacular increase. According to one estimation, public expenditure in Greece rose from 30.8 percent of GNP in 1974 to 35.2 percent in 1978 and around 42 percent in 1979, with unstoppable upward tendencies.[63] In similar fashion, public spending in Spain increased from 24.9 percent of GDP in 1975 to 38.0 percent in 1982.[64] In public employment, we observe different pictures. In Greece, as in Italy, the public sector of the economy was enormously increased in the initial years after democratic transition. Spanish state jobs not only remained stable, but were in fact reduced in the 1980s due to the PSOE policies on "industrial reconversion".

To sum up and conclude this section, the success of the conservative democratic program in Italy, Greece and Spain required, besides potent party organizations, the provision of social citizenship rights, which were granted in the form of welfare entitlements and/or state jobs. In all three countries, the massive growth of social expenditure offered welfare benefits to many social categories and groups. Although those policies had a particularistic and selective nature, in that they tended to favor some regions (e.g., underdeveloped areas such as Italy's South), some social groups (e.g., pensioners everywhere) or certain occupational categories (e.g., public employees and the self-employed), they managed nonetheless to provide a

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62 Francis G. Castles, "Welfare State Development in Southern Europe", *West European Politics* 18:2 (April 1995), 306.

63 Constantine Colmer, "The Greek Economy at a Crucial Turning-Point: Political Reality Versus Social Aspirations", in the collective volume *The New Liberalism: The Future of Non-Collectivist Institutions in Europe and the U.S.* (Athens: KPEE, International Symposium, May 1981).

64 Maravall, "Politics and Policy", 89.

very broad range of beneficiaries with the material means for their reproduction. The continuous increase of the public sector created more and more state jobs and, hence, state dependencies in Italy and Greece. The social policies of the conservatives reduced sharp economic inequalities in societies. Large sectors in society managed to improve their positions and were successfully brought into the center of political systems thanks to state assistance.

6. Bringing the parts of conservative strategy together: Party institutionalization through state colonization

The emphasis has been, thus far, on examining the two main elements of the conservative democratic program separately. Let us now turn to the following issues: How these two elements interrelated to each other so as to produce their cumulative political outcome; and how successful was that outcome in Southern Europe's actual politics.

Beginning with the second issue, I will take success (or, inversely, failure) for each conservative party in Southern Europe to be a function of three objectives: democratic consolidation; longevity in office; and survival after electoral defeat. Consolidation of democracy was the stated objective of all conservative parties in Italy, Greece and Spain. By and large, in this respect all three governing parties present success stories. Yet, democracy is more than a goal in itself. Political elites, in particular, are likely to view it as a means to prolonging their own rule. If we therefore take longevity in office as our measure of success, the DC scores very high, having held office for forty-five years, while ND and the UCD, with seven and five years in office respectively, cannot boast a comparable success.[65] Finally, it is also possible to measure success by the durability of the conservative parties after electoral defeat and

65 The record of ND in this respect is certainly improved by adding up the three years it exercized power between 1990 and 1993.

the loss of government. On this count, only the ND—and, albeit permanently in opposition, the AP/PP—have really been successful.

Since the first of the foregoing measures of success applies without significant degrees of variation to all three parties, we may as well dismiss it. We get more discriminatory power by measuring success in terms of party duration in office, or durability after losing it. On these grounds, the UCD alone fails to qualify as a successful case. This party offered the Spanish electorate generous social benefits (but no state jobs) but failed to stimulate participation and build a party mechanism able to solidify its support, as well as fend off attacks from the opposition. Eventually, the Socialists outbid the UCD by outpromising it in terms of social policies and fighting elections more efficiently on account of their better organization. Since the UCD disappeared so quickly, we are forced to ask: Why did this party fail where its ideological-and-political counterparts in Italy and Greece succeeded? My contention is that the party organizations of DC and ND became permanent and strongly institutionalized, largely because these parties managed to take advantage of their role as public-office holders, thus succeeding in occupying the state and controlling its functions.

Party institutionalization is therefore a convenient point from which to explore the issue. It has recently been argued that no conservative party in Southern Europe has ever been fully institutionalized. Absence of institutionalization is attributed to: (a) the failure to successfully diffuse disparate loyalties within parties (as in UCD); (b) weak party cohesion, despite successful routinization of charisma (as in ND); or (c) the impediments posed by outside sponsoring organizations (as in DC).[66] This theory suffers from two drawbacks, the first associated with its heavy reliance on the genetic model of parties, and the second with its bias towards examining parties only in relation

66 Panebianco, *Political Parties*, 65 and passim.

to societies, not states.[67] Yet, parties evolve and develop, and, while they do so, the state hardly remains a variable exogenous to that process.

One may argue, as Panebianco does, that party institutionalization is "the way [party] organization 'solidifies'".[68] Yet, just asking *how* this occurs is not enough. There is also need to find out *where* institutionalization takes place, to determine in other words its location within the polity. This may well happen at society's level, but it also may happen at the level of state. To better capture this issue, I suggest we proceed on the basis of the following four premises:

1. Conservatives in power build party organizations in order to bring societies into democratic politics (and win votes).
2. Conservatives in power control the state and its welfare institutions, so they may determine who gets what and how much in terms of welfare and state jobs.
3. Welfare benefits and state jobs tend to increase in order to moderate social conflict (and win more votes to the ruling conservatives).
4. Welfare benefits and state jobs, however, retain a particularistic character since they are only granted to specific social categories.

Premises (1) and (3) summarize the major components of the conservative strategy in newly democratized Southern Europe, as well as their objectives. Yet, no matter how increased in volume, the allocation of welfare benefits and state jobs remains discretionary (4) and dependent upon the parties that enjoy power—for as long as they do so (2).[69] The ruling conservatives were in a position to control welfare patronage to the degree that their respetive parties were able to occupy the state. By interposing themselves between the input and the output ends of the clientelist channels, the conservative parties could

67 *Ibid.*, 49-68. Curiously, while this author admits that one of the ways for measuring institutionalization is "the organization's degree of autonomy *vis-à-vis* its environment" (p. 55), one understands by "environment" only dynamics generated at society level, the state never entering the picture.

68 *Ibid.*, 49.

69 Cf, Peter Mair, "Political Parties, Popular Legitimacy and Public Privilege", *West European Politics* 18:3 (July 1995), 40-57.

act as "collective patrons to their active supporters who became the clients of the state."[70] Thus having settled the matter, we may now confidently say that it was at the state, not at society level, that the Italian and the Greek conservative parties obtained institutionalization.

The sudden increase of party power in Italy and Greece, as well as the ability of parties in government to conquer the state, caused the adaptive adjustment of time-honored clientelistic practices.[71] It is not an accident, of course, that political science borrows directly from the Italian political vocabularly to describe these processes as *partitocrazia* and *sottogoverno*.[72] The linkage of these phenomena created a new kind of state clientelism which, contrary to the traditional clientelistic practices, was rationalized by political parties. The characteristics of this new, post-authoritarian clientelism (as contrasted to forms of traditional clientelism) may be summed up as follows:[73] (*i*) The *units involved* in the clientelist exchange are not local notables and their political friends nor the state and the citizens in an autonomous fashion, but office-holding parties and their organized membership; (*ii*) The *criteria for admission* in such political transactions are not personal acquaintance at the local level nor even loyalty to the state, but some proof of party-membership; (*iii*) The *form and type of relationship* is not informal and achieved nor semi-formal and ascribed, but rather formal and attained; (*iv*) The *channeling of demands* takes place not vertically, via disparate individual patrons, loose parties, or a haphazard chain of state associates, but horizontally, via

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70 Dimitrios A. Sotiropoulos, "A Colossus With Feet of Clay: The State in Post-Authoritarian Greece", in Harry J. Psomiades and Stavros B. Thomadakis (eds.), *Greece, the New Europe, and the Changing International Order* (New York: Pella, 1993), 47.

71 For Italy, see Massimo Paci, "Il Sistema di Welfare Italiano fra Tradizione Clientelare e Prospettive di Riforma", in Ugo Ascoli (ed.), *Welfare State all' Italiana* (Bari: Laterza, 1984), 297-326.

72 *Partitocrazia* means exacly what the word says; *sottogoverno* is a generalized and abusive system of patronage operated by the organizations of political parties and based on political jobbery and the exchange of reciprocal favors.

73 A more complete analysis is included in Pappas, The Making of Party Democracy in Greece, 348.

permanent party organizations; (*v*) In such flows of demands and claims, *gatekeeping* is performed neither at the private nor the state level, but at the level of ruling political parties; (*vi*) The *overriding political rationale* of patrons is, therefore, not the maintenance and/or expansion of local power bases nor the isolation of dissidents, but enhancing the governing party's staying power; and, finally, (*vii*) The *main function performed* by such clientelistic exchanges is not the primordial incorporation of societies into the political system nor its organization by state controls, but the reproduction of the governing parties' own rule.

To recapitulate, the system of welfare patronage that developed particularly in Italy and Greece *for the first time after the establishment of democratic politics and under conservative rule,* became feasible thanks to the success of the conservative political program itself. It was, in other words, the simultaneous existence of sufficiently organized political parties, as well as the necessity of delivering more social welfare and more state jobs, that made possible the conquest of the state. By fusing their own political organizations with the state (and, therefore, subsidizing the activities of the former with the functions of the latter), the ruling conservative parties in Italy and Greece effectively transformed themselves into state parties.[74] By then, party organizations had already turned into mere "technical instruments, designed as means to definite goals"[75]—the prolongation of conservative rule through the effective conquest of the state and its welfare institutions. The politics of party patronage became so convenient and politically rewarding to governments that they were preserved even after the conservatives had been removed from power. As appears especially from the cases of the socialist PASOK in

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74 Donolo, for instance, describes the DC as "a party which tends to identify itself with state institutions, thus investing itself with an authority properly that of the state"; Carlo Donolo, "Social Change and Transformation of the State in Italy", in Richard Scase (ed.), *The State in Western Europe* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 165.

75 Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 21.

Greece and the PSOE in Spain, partisan patronage was in fact enriched with more qualities, so as to better exclude the opposition parties from the privileges associated with office, and already seems to have become a permanent feature of democracy in Southern Europe.

7. Accessory requisites for the success of conservative strategy: Ideological legitimacy and the directions of party competition

The success of the conservative democratic programs in Southern Europe depended on the existence of party organizations (to uphold the programs by bringing people into politics) and the development of welfare states (to satisfy demands for social equality and justice). The ruling conservatives in Italy and Greece furnished both requirements for democracy-building to a remarkable degree. Spain's UCD was less successful, hence its fast eclipse after only five years in power. This hardly harmed democracy, however, especially since the political program of the Socialists was nowhere significantly different from that of their conservative predecessors. This raises the question: If presenting a well worked-out strategy was an absolutely necessary condition for the success of the conservative project in Italy and Greece (and Spain), was it also a sufficient one for keeping the conservative parties in these two countries in power (longer than in Spain)? And, if yes, why the Italian Christian Democrats were in this respect far more successful than the Greek ND? In this section, I am going to introduce legitimacy as an explanatory variable for prolonging conservative rule, mostly confining the analysis to Greece and Italy.

Loaded with unfavorable political legacies, without entirely untainted images, and with plenty of reactionary leftovers in their ranks,[76] conservatives in both countries needed to furnish hard evidence of having severed past ties with

76 The "purification" of the new regimes from fascists, when undertook at all, remained partial and incomplete. In all three countries many anti-democrats remained firmly in positions of power, especially in the administration and repressive apparatuses of the respective states.

their anti-democratic progenitors. Ordinary people in all Southern Europe have long memories, and no party organization nor any amount of social welfare could buy off their desire for justice. In political cultures that have been replete with ideological symbolisms pertaining particularly to the division between left and right,[77] and where party identities are forged and political groups are largely made on the basis of symbolic legitimacy, it was a crucial matter for the old conservatives to appear in new clothes and speak in different voices than in the past. To put it simply, images mattered and if the self-proclaimed reformist conservatives were to offset past debits with recent credits, they needed to dissociate themselves from their often reprobate pasts and look for new symbolic legitimacy. In trying to take clear distances from the non-legitimate right, the typical response of moderate conservatives was to move closer to the political center. In point of fact, centripetalism presented to them more than the only solution available. It also seemed to fit well the post-authoritarian conservative political design, since it promoted political moderation and convergence while discouraging ideological polarization and divergence.

Political culture in Southern Europe has always been characterized by anti-conservative political beliefs (such as anarchosyndicalism or socialism) which, even when they do not become dominant, typically enjoy a widespread, albeit diffuse, legitimacy in civil societies. It is hard to find any similarly coherent belief that draws from moderate conservative principles and has become broadly accepted by societies. It was this lack of generally recognizable and legitimate ideological underpinnings, in combination with the fear of remaining associated with the reactionary right, that forced all post-authoritarian liberal conservatives in Southern Europe to develop strong

77 Richard Gunther and José R. Montero, "The Anchors of Partisanship: A Comparative Analysis of Voting Behavior in Four Southern European Democracies", in Richard Gunther et al., *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation.*

centripetal drives. If a valid claim to legitimacy would not be easily made by positive ideology alone, it could certainly be evidenced had moderate conservatives managed to captivate one of the legitimate positions on the ideological spectrum of party competition. This is why the tendency to occupy the middle ground in politics, by offering electorates both verbal (political rhetoric) and pragmatic (real policies) assurances, and which is known as *centrismo*, centrism, became for the moderate conservatives of such paramount importance. The center seemed to offer the conservatives ideal positioning for implementing their programs and securing their dominance. Thereupon, following Milton's advise, "from the centre, thrice to th' utmost poll".

Politics, however, is seldom the domain of mere wishful thinking. Although both the DC and the ND exhibited strong centripetal drives, only the former managed to occupy (or be perceived as occupying) the political-*cum*-ideological center. ND remained unable to capture the center and, for this, it lost power *despite the success of its democratic program*. Why did things happen the way they happened in the two countries?

Centripetal movement along the left-to-right dimension is not unrestrained. To the contrary, physical centripetalism is curbed, and sometimes halted, (a) by the existence of opposition from the extreme right, and (b) the existence of other parties on the center and center-right. It moreover depends (c) on the type of party system and (d) the "elasticity" of the space of competition.[78] Given such constraints and dependencies, the issue is to find out how far the moderate conservative parties in Italy and Greece *were able to* travel centerward. Ideological centripetalism, on the other hand, depends on the

78 The latter two points are raised, and explained, by Sartori. More specifically, polarized pluralist systems do pressupose the "center placement of a party" (which could well be a conservative one). The concept of "space elasticity', as is used by the same author, indicates how long or how short is each time the length of space between conservatives and the center. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 134 and passim, 343, 347.

symbolic strategies of the competing political forces and the degree they manage to manipulate symbolic associations to their favor. By using this variable, we shall be in a position to attest how close to the center were the conservatives actually *permitted* to approach by their ideological opponents. Generally speaking, physical occupation involves a war of positions, while symbolic occupation entails a war of words.

The case of the Italian Christian Democrats is perhaps the clearest. DC secured its center positioning because of the dynamics of an extremely polarized political system characterized by bilateral oppositions. With the Cold War rampant for the most part of modern Italian history, the struggle between the Christian Democrats and the Communists was presented as a choice between civilizations, thus locking large segments of the Italian society into antipodal partisan affiliations remaining until recently in virulent opposition to each other. Right-wing opposition came mainly from the fascist Movimiento Sociale Italiano (MSI),[79] a typical anti-system party seeking to undermine democratic legitimacy and, hence, the Christian democratic political project itself. Anti-fascism became one of the dominant themes in postwar Italian politics, and, particularly in the northern and central regions of the country, it was emphasized by the Christian Democrats no less forcefully than by the Communists. Despite the significant failures of *epurazione*, DC was from the very beginning careful to keep a clear distance from the remnants of fascism, its leaders defining it as "a party of the center looking at the left" (in De Gasperi's words) and which was at the same time "popular and anti-fascist" (in Moro's words). Consequently, DC was obliged to draw a clear demarcating line between itself and the right, and move centerward. The eligibility of MSI for coalitions with the Christian Democrats remained an officially taboo subject in Italy. Until the late 1960s, DC relied for coalition-building on a variety of

79 Opposition to the Christian democrats also came from the Monarchists until their party was ultimately absorbed by the MSI in 1972.

smaller centrist parties such as the Liberals, Republicans, or Social Democrats, always careful to exclude the far right, whether monarchical or not.[80] And when the heterogeneity of the center coalition parties presented unsolvable problems, the Christian Democrats, in almost exemplary imitation of pre-fascist transformist practices, invited into the governmental coalition the parties of the left, still excluding the ultras of the right.[81]

Like in Italy, the political situation in Greece after democratic reinstitution was not quite genial. Sons and grandsons of the civil war veterans had passionately kept the memory of the fratricidal struggle alive, subsequently blending it with their own post-war political experiences. The old dichotomy between right and left reappeared with the 1974 transition to democracy, dividing Greeks into two broad, subculturally distinct social communities. Soon afterwards, it would transform into the clash between the ND and PASOK, which presented themselves as unmitigated antagonists and intransigent enemies. Sharp ideological bipolarity and acute polarization of society remain the main characteristics of Greek politics until this day. The relation of moderate conservatives with the extreme right is, in the present context, more interesting. In fact, the ND faced serious opposition only unilaterally, due to the absence of a politically entrenched, as well as durable, political force on the far right of the political competition space, able to exercize significant centrifugal pulls. True, the extreme right breakaways who formed the National Front (EP) shortly before the 1977 elections became capable (until they disappeared soon thereafter) of some "blackmailing", but this is a far cry from saying that EP actually succeeded in frustrating the

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80 For a concise review of coalition-building in post-war Italy, see David Hine, *Governing Italy: The Politics of Bargained Pluralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), esp. 96-107.

81 Yet, the MSI anything but merged with the moderate conservatives or otherwise disappeared. And what else is it if not an irony of history that, at the end, instead of being progressively absorbed by the Christian Democrats, the MSI would in fact outlast them and, after the demise of DC, even be invited as a (quasi-legitimate) partner in a governmental coalition?

centripetalism of the moderate conservatives.[82] the ND was thus able to push a good deal centerward precisely because political competition in Greece was predominantly bipolar between two large parties, the ND on the broad right and PASOK on the broad left.[83]

Yet, because the extreme right was neither organizationally coherent (thus delimiting the linear distance separating it and the center) nor was it entirely absorbed by the ND (thus eliminating its delegitimizing potential), the length of space between right and center appeared in Greece quite extended, this caused the overstretching of ND in its attempt to cover it. Taking advantage of this situation, PASOK, pitting a conflictual logic against ND's consensual one, pursued a strategy of polarization with the purpose of reinforcing Greece's dominant right-left cleavage.[84] Although the ND managed to go a long way towards the center in terms of actual policies, it was unable to do so in terms of symbolic associations and lay uncontested claims to democratic purity. The "center", both in its ideological and physical dimensions, was lost to ND because PASOK proved more capable of moving in and imposing itself as the authorized and legitimate occupant of that space. The ND, handcuffed to its past and incapable of reversing symbolic associations to its favor, failed to entirely dissociate itself from its reprobate right-wing past and be perceived as a centrist, and hence wholly legitimate, party.

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82 For this view see Seraphim Seferiades, "Polarization and Nonproportionality: The Greek Party System in the Postwar Era", *Comparative Politics* 19:1 (1986), based on the erroneous assumption that the party system in Greece is characterized by extreme and polarized pluralism.

83 This thesis has been fully developed by George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Rise of the Green Sun: The Greek Election of 1981* (London: Centre of Contemporary Greek Studies, King's College; Occasional Paper no.1, 1983); and, by the same author, "The Greek Party System: A Case of 'Limited but Polarized Pluralism'?", in Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair (eds.), *Party Politics in Contemporary Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1984).

84 Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Democratic Breakdown and Consolidation: The Theoretical Implications of the 'Greek Paradox'", paper presented at the 1995 Symposium of the Modern Greek Studies Association, Cambridge, Mass., November 2-5, 1995, 6 and passim.

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